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IN THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently amended) Connection means comprising a coupling ~~(1)~~ defining an internal channel ~~(3)~~ having an end segment ~~(7)~~ possessing an insertion opening ~~(6)~~ for insertion of an endpiece ~~(8)~~ and ~~provided with~~ means for retaining the endpiece therein in a leaktight manner ~~therein~~, said means comprising an annular sealing element ~~(11)~~ that is axially compressible and ~~that~~ is mounted in the coupling to have one face serving as a bearing surface for a terminal face of the endpiece, and an ~~annularly shaped~~ annularly shaped retaining element ~~(18)~~ that is elastically deformable in a radial direction and ~~that~~ is received in an inner groove ~~(21)~~ of the end segment in order to have an inner circumferential portion projecting through an opening of the inner groove so as to be received in an outer groove ~~(24)~~ of the endpiece, ~~wherein~~ the inner groove ~~has~~ having a concave frustoconical flank ~~(22)~~ beside the opening of the end segment to form means for shrinking the retaining element, and a convex frustoconical flank ~~(23)~~ on its side remote from the opening,

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~~which~~ said flank ~~is being~~ spaced apart from the concave frustoconical flank by a distance such that the retaining element is received with clearance in the inner groove, and ~~wherein~~ the terminal face of the endpiece and the outer groove thereof ~~are being~~ spaced apart by a distance slightly greater than the distance between the face of the sealing element and the opening of the inner groove of the coupling.

6. (Currently amended) Connection means according to claim 5, wherein the outer groove ~~(24)~~ of the endpiece ~~(8)~~ has a convex frustoconical flank beside a terminal face of the endpiece ~~(8)~~, said flank ~~co-operating~~ cooperating with the concave frustoconical flank of the inner groove of the coupling ~~(1)~~ to form an angle that is open towards the insertion opening.

7. (Currently amended) Connection means according to claim 6, wherein the ~~above-specified~~ angle is about 10°.

8. (Currently amended) Means Connection means according to claim 5, wherein the retaining element is a split ring ~~(18)~~ having chamfer-shaped ends ~~(19)~~ on the inside of the split ring.